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# pierre menard

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## THE MENARD HOME

The Menard Home is the finest example of Southern French Colonial architecture in the central part of the Mississippi Valley.

The structure's frame was assembled in the manner used by the French at that time; hand-hewn timbers (sills) laid on the foundation, vertical studs mortised and tenoned into the sills and into other timbers (now called plates) placed horizontally across the stud tops. The vertical members often were spaced irregularly.

Sandstone and limestone found in the vicinity were used for the foundation, walks and walls. The hand-hewn roof trusses and other parts of the frame were pinned together with wooden pegs, but nails were used to fasten shingles to the roof, in applying interior and exterior trim, and for exterior siding.

Native woods, such as oak, walnut, poplar and hickory, were used for frame construction and finishing the house.

Research on the home's surrounding grounds continues. Remains of a spring house have been partially excavated and a well has been located. Both are unquestionably original. A structure thought for many years to have been slave quarters was found to be the former smokehouse when original beams, meat hooks and other smokehouse paraphernalia were discovered behind more recent construction. The building has been restored.

Research has uncovered little about the home's landscaping, other than the fact that the house was surrounded by a grove of pecan trees.

The setting as it is seen today is an effort to re-create the original scene through the use of a small amount of evidence and the application of long-standing design principles to plant materials common to Menard's time.

According to a Randolph County atlas published in 1875, the Menard estate included some 2,900 acres of land and other holdings.

## LIFE OF MENARD

Pierre Menard was born October 7, 1766, at St. Antoine, Quebec, of Jean Baptiste Menard, an officer in the French Canadian army, and Marie Francoise Ciree, a woman of superior education and intelligence.

He left Canada at the age of 22 for Post de Vinsenne—now Vincennes, Indiana—where he was employed by Francis Vigo, a merchant and fur trader.

A highlight of his association with Vigo was their trip to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to confer with General George Washington on the defense of the Northwest Territory.

Menard's interest in public affairs began in 1790, when he and Louissant Du Bois opened a trading post at Kaskaskia. It was an interest he pursued first at the territorial, then the state level for the next 38 years.

He became Illinois' first Lieutenant Governor in 1818, after the state's new constitution was amended to make him eligible for the post. The legislature trimmed to two years a constitutional provision requiring 20-years' U.S. citizenship as a qualification for holding public office.

In 1792, Menard married Therese Godin, who died in 1804 and left four children. Two years later, he married Angelique Saucier, granddaughter of the French Army's Engineer General Francios Saucier, who supervised construction of the original Fort Chartres. Six children were born of this union.

In 1802, he began construction of his home, now often called "The Mt. Vernon of the West," but several years passed before it was completed as it is seen today.

Menard, a man of many facets, enjoyed his home and entertained many American and foreign notables there. But he was a friend to all men, regardless of their race or station in life.

He retired to his home after many years as a public servant and political figure. In 1844, he died there at the age of 78, leaving a fortune estimated at more than a quarter of a million dollars.



## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Admittance will not be granted groups of 25 or more persons to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the park ranger has been secured to use the facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and that at least one responsible adult accompany each group not exceeding 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous State Parks and Memorials are within easy access to every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest and Giant City. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

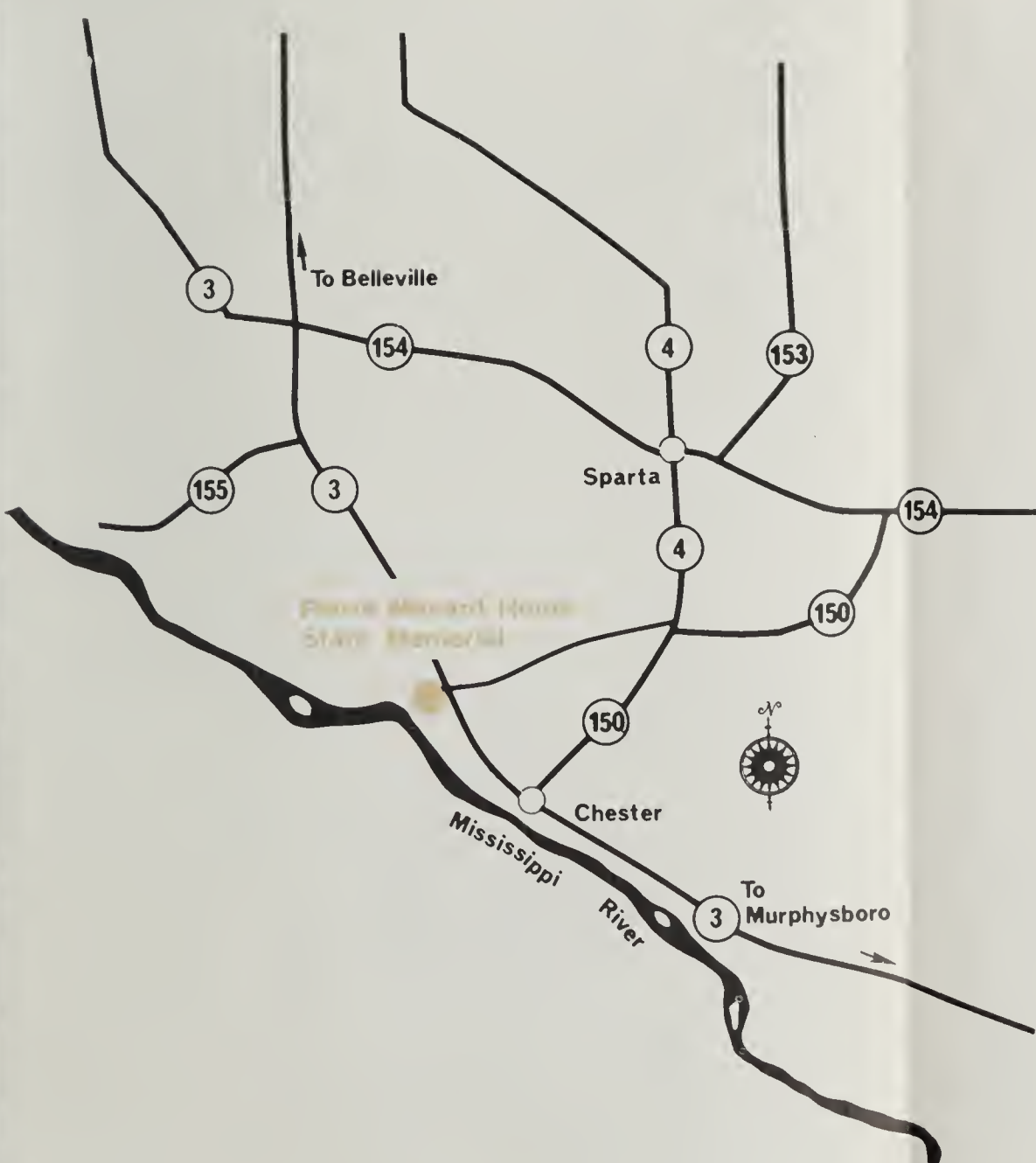
All state parks are open the year round, except when weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods when access to park facilities is by foot traffic only.

For further information concerning Illinois State Parks and Memorials write to the Division of Education, Department of Conservation, State Office Building, Springfield, 62706.





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